THE GAMESTER,

A

TRUE STORY;

ON WHICH THE

Tragedy of that Name,

Now acting at the

Theatre Royal in *Drury-Lane*,

IS FOUNDED.

Tranſlated from the ITALIAN.

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PREFACE.

AS the TRAGEDY *of the* GAMESTER, *has given general ſatisfaction to the publick; I thought a tranſlation of the real fact, from the* Italian *narration, could not but pleaſe thoſe who receiv'd entertainment from the dramatical performance.*

THE

PREFACE.

THE GAMESTER,

A TRUE STORY.

SIgnior Lyſandro, a gentleman of great family and fortune, was left early in poſſeſſion of his paternal eſtate: And tho' in his youth he had given into the follies of his companions, and the country he liv'd in, Italy; yet, upon loſing a moſt intimate, dear friend of his,

whoſe name was Julio, and who was kill'd in a duel upon his account, a deep melancholly ſeiz'd him; he lock'd himſelf from all company, ſhun'd all diverſions, and ſeem'd determin'd to encourage his grief, 'till it ſhou'd join him to his belov'd Julio in the grave.

Polardo, an aged man who had liv'd many years with Lyſandro's father in the quality of a ſteward, was the only one he wou'd admit to his preſence; and had it not been for Polardo's care and tenderneſs of him, he wou'd certainly have ended life, by refuſing the proper means of ſupporting it. This honeſt man us'd all his art to make him ſhake off the melancholly diſpoſition he had attain'd; and tho' he labour'd upwards of a year in vain, he at laſt prevail'd with him to go to a ball, held at a nobleman's houſe, at the celebration of his birth-day, who had been an intimate friend and companion of his father's.

The ſcene at firſt gave him no pleaſure, and he wou'd have retir'd to his ſolitude again, had not ſome of his former acquaintance laid hold of him, and inſiſted upon his ſtaying; which wou'd have prov'd ineffectual,

effectual, had not the ladies join'd in their requeſt. — Here his complaiſance got the better of his melancholly, and he determin'd to remain with the company.

Lyſandro's grief, as he was a perſon of fortune and diſtinction, had been whiſper'd every where; ſo that, upon this occaſion, the ladies were particular in their addreſſes to him, in hopes to diſperſe that ſorrow, that had ſo long kept him confin'd from the gay and moſt lovely part of the creation.

Lyſandro receiv'd their endeavours to entertain him with complaiſance, but not with pleaſure; 'till the fair Tereſa Paulina, a lady of equal rank and fortune with himſelf, undertook to engage him to dance. He accepted the invitation with ſome reluctance at firſt; but ſuch beauty as Tereſa poſſeſs'd, cou'd not long be look'd upon with indifference.

Lyſandro's melancholly was ſomewhat diſpers'd, by the ſweetneſs and cheerfulneſs of his part'ner: And her eyes, which had exerted their power ſo ſucceſsfully upon his heart, to give it a relaxation from grief,

extended

extended their influence ſtill further; and, like ſome powerful princes, who are ſent to relieve a country from oppreſſion, drive out the firſt invaders, and take poſſeſſion of it themſelves. In ſhort, a night's converſation and dancing with Tereſa, fixt her conqueſt, and Lyſandro became enamour'd of her.

As his perſon was graceful and his converſation agreeable, he obtain'd ſo much upon the lady, that ſhe promis'd to receive his viſit at her toilet next day. —— The company parted, and Lyſandro went home much agitated, but not with that kind of ſorrow he came out with: No, he was now diſturb'd with the doubts and fears of a lover —— Pleaſure mixt with pain, and hope with fear.

Signior Caſſardo, a perſon of great ſhew, but not of any known fortune, had at diſtance often offerr'd his ſervice to this lady, but without ſucceſs. Whether from the lady's not liking his perſon, or what other motive, can't be ſaid; but, it is certain, ſhe never gave him an opportunity of explaining himſelf fully.

It would hardly ſuit with the preſent taſte of writing, to give a large account of the ſeveral love-dialogues that are in the original of this ſtory: So I ſhall take the liberty to ſay at once, that after a month's courtſhip Lyſandro was married to the fair Tereſa.——Splendor, equipage, ſtate, liberality and happineſs were the conſequences; which continu'd without interruption for upwards of fourteen months, in which time Tereſa had added a ſon to the happineſs of Lyſandro, which compleated the pleaſure love had began.

While Tereſa was in her pregnancy, Lyſandro's ſiſter, ſigniora Camilla, who had liv'd ever ſince her parents death with her uncle, ſome leagues remov'd from Rome, came to viſit him: A lady endow'd with every qualification that could raiſe love in our ſex, or envy in her own.

Her arrival renew'd the ſcene of pleaſure; balls, cards, and all ſorts of amuſements, employ'd every apartment.—— Among the crowd of cavaliers that this occaſion brought to the houſe, ſigniora Camilla's beauty and ſprightly addreſs ſoon caught the hearts of many.

many. She engag'd their whole attention; and no diverſion was compleat, if this lady was not at the head of it.

Her good humour was diffus'd to all; but her particular ſmiles were ſoon diſcover'd to be beſtow'd upon a young nobleman of Spain, call'd Alvarez, who had been ſchool-fellow with Lyſandro, and now came on purpoſe to congratulate him upon his good fortune.

Alvarez was equally ſenſible of Camilla's charms, nor was it long before this ſudden liking grew into a mutual affection. Camilla quitted the publick pleaſures, for the more affecting ſatisfaction of hearing her lover's private proteſtations.

Amidſt the crowd of company that came to theſe joyful meetings, Lyſandro made many intimates; among which number Caſſardo and Alvarez were not the leaſt in his favour, but his attachment to the firſt ſeem'd the ſtrongeſt. Whether Lyſandro found ſomething more agreeable in him than the reſt, or whether Caſſardo had artfully laid hold of ſome weak part in the other, is not certain,

certain, but their friendſhip ſeem'd mutual and inviolable.

The publick pleaſures being over, the company began to diſperſe, and Lyſandro's houſe became more retir'd. —— Alvarez, who had came from Spain to congratulate his friend, at the requeſt of Lyſandro, ſtill continu'd: But, indeed, had he not been invited, it would have been difficult to get rid of him; for Camilla's charms had ſo enſlav'd him, that abſence would have been worſe than death to him. The lady too was in the ſame bonds; for inſtead of returning to her uncle, at the time ſhe had promis'd, ſhe ſent a letter, begging a longer ſtay with Lyſandro: So much was ſhe averſe, to leaving her dear Alvarez.

While theſe lovers improv'd their affections, their intimacy grew every day with Lyſandro's wife; whoſe opinion of their mutual merit ſo encreas'd, that tho' ſhe ſaw their inclinations, far from checking their growing loves, encourag'd, and wiſh'd a happy conſummation of it.

Lyſandro, as yet, knew nothing of their paſſion, for he was ſo attach'd to his new intimate,

intimate, Caſſardo, that he ſeem'd to reliſh his company abroad, more than his domeſtic converſation.

Caſſardo was a man of wit, and of a moſt inſinuating converſation; yet withal, he was a great libertine, and had many vices, but the greateſt and moſt fatal was GAMING. A wicked avarice was his predominant paſſion, and kept down every virtue that might have made him uſeful to ſociety, and a bleſſing to his country.

The fondneſs Lyſandro had for him ſoon made him blind to his follies, and ſhare in his vices. He went with him to all his parties of play, and loſt conſiderably by backing him; which ſoon ſour'd his temper, took of the reliſh of his happineſs at home, and turn'd his whole mind upon nothing but how to recover what he had loſt. This it was impoſſible for him to do; for Caſſardo, when he had fir'd him with a love of play, planted two common ſharpers, Corrigio and Juano, diſguis'd like gentlemen of fortune, upon him; who, with falſe dice, mark'd cards, and other acts of villainy, were ſure to ſtrip him of all he play'd for. —— Caſſardo, tho' he loſt equally with his friend, pretended

pretended to have large ſums, and often ſupply'd Lyſandro with money. His own money, indeed, which he had ſhar'd with his two confederates.

The gentle Tereſa and Camilla could not help perceiving the alteration in Lyſandro's temper, and often queſtion'd him concerning it; but he avoided an explanation, and kept as much abroad as poſſible, to ſhun their enquiries. Every night he play'd, and was as conſtantly ſtript. He mortgag'd his eſtate, and ſold his diamonds, giving part of the money to Caſſardo, who pretended to be undone, by backing and lending his friend.

Lyſandro's melancholly encreas'd, and his family's diſtreſs, who were ſtill ignorant of the cauſe; 'till ſome demands, which Lyſandro could not ſatisfy, too plainly convinc'd them an alteration in his fortune, occaſion'd that in his temper and behaviour.—— They communicated their misfortunes to Alvarez, who kindly undertook to ſearch out the cauſe; which he did ſo artfully, that he ſoon had reaſons to ſuſpect Caſſardo was not innocent of Lyſandro's misfortunes.

While Alvarez was thus employ'd, Lyſandro's ill fortune went on; and, in a few days, an execution took poſſeſſion of all his plate, furniture, &c. and turn'd his wife and ſiſter to ſeek their habitation where they could. —— Alvarez took lodgings for them, but the ſtrange alteration fill'd the wife and ſiſter with ſorrow, and Lyſandro with rage and madneſs.

It was ſome time before Alvarez, ſpite of all his induſtry, could convince him his ſuſpicions of Caſſardo were well founded; 'till at laſt an accident happen'd that confirm'd them, and gave him full proof of his villainy.

Corrigio, one of the ſharpers employ'd to ruin Lyſandro, one evening late, being in liquor, aſſaulted a biſhop in the ſtreet, juſt as Alvarez was paſſing by. The guard immediately ſeiz'd Corrigio, and threw him in priſon; whither Alvarez went, at the biſhop's requeſt, who was ſomething related to him, to examine the villain, and know at whoſe inſtigation he had dar'd to affront a perſon of his dignity.

Alvarez

Alvarez knew Corrigio was an intimate of Caſſardo's, and therefore hop'd to frighten him into a declaration of what he knew of Lyſandro. —— He laid before him the puniſhment would be inflicted on him, upon the biſhop's account; that the gallies, at leaſt, would be his fate; adding, that if he would tell honeſtly Caſſardo's treatment of Lyſandro, he would ſollicite the biſhop in his behalf, and doubted not but he ſhould procure him a pardon.

Corrigio, willing to engage the friendſhip of Alvarez, declar'd the truth; that Caſſardo's intention was to ruin Lyſandro; that Juano had already bought his eſtate for Caſſardo's uſe, with Lyſandro's own money; that his ſiſter's fortune, to whom he was guardian, was alſo loſt; that he had got an aſſignment of the reverſion of his uncle's eſtate; adding, that all theſe purchaſes had been made by Juano, whom Caſſardo had repreſented as one whoſe buſineſs was to lend money upon good ſecurities.

Alvarez promis'd Corrigio his liberty, provided he kept what had paſs'd a ſecret, and return'd to Caſſardo, join as uſual in his villainies,

villainies, and tell him what farther ſchemes he had laid upon Lyſandro. He then flew to the diſtreſs'd Tereſa, to relate the diſcoveries he had made.

He found the poor unhappy lady in the utmoſt diſtreſs. Upon ſight of Alvarez ſhe burſt into rage; and, as well as grief would permit her, told him, Caſſardo had been laying ſuch charges of villainy and inconſtancy upon her husband, as one of Lyſandro's virtue could never be guilty of: And, to add to her miſery, the wicked Caſſardo had offerr'd her his protection, if ſhe would leave her husband, and fly with him beyond his reach; urging, he had a prior title, having paid his addreſs to her before ſhe ſaw Lyſandro.

Alvarez, ſtung with this villainous offer, flew to ſeek him; and, on the publick piazza, charg'd him with his infamy; which Caſſardo deny'd, or evaded, with all the cunning hell and his foul practices had furniſh'd him with——but was not without a ſcheme of revenge in his head.

He flew to Lyſandro, told him, Alvarez had expos'd his character, and ruin'd his reputation,

putation, and then artfully ſpurr'd him on to revenge; which ſo fir'd Lyſandro, that he vow'd vengeance againſt Alvarez.—— Mean time Caſſardo employ'd Corrigio to murder Alvarez, which Corrigio undertook to perform; but, as he had promis'd, told Alvarez of Caſſardo's deſign.

Caſſardo then ſet Juano on to arreſt Lyſandro, for ſums he had lent him, and carry him to priſon; leſt he ſhould go home, and his wife ſhould let him know the offer he had made, before he had compleated his vengeance.

Corrigio brought intelligence to Caſſardo, that he had effectually put an end to his fears in Alvarez, for he had ended him, as directed. Mean time Alvarez got proper officers, ſeiz'd Caſſardo, with all his effects, and ſent him to priſon: Then being inform'd, by Corrigio, of Lyſandro's confinement, haſten'd to him, but came too late; for, before he had reach'd the jail, Lyſandro's ſhame, ſorrow, and agonizing pangs, had turn'd him deſperate, and with a knife he had in his pocket put an end to all his miſeries at once; leaving his unhappy wife, ſiſter,

ſiſter, and uncle, to lament his fatal cataſtrophe.

Caſſardo was brought to a proper court, and try'd for his villainous practices; where every fact was plainly prov'd by Corrigio and Juano, and he condemn'd to the gallies for life. His eſtate, goods, and whatever property that cou'd be found of his, were reſtor'd to Tereſa and Camilla: The firſt of which retir'd to a monaſtery; and the other, about ten months after, was married to Alvarez, whoſe honour, and virtuous endeavours to ſave the family, well deſerv'd her affections.

This is the ſtory, as publiſh'd in Rome: How the Engliſh author may have adapted it to the ſtage, the publick have already given their approbation.

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FINIS.

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